THOMAS PAINE.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Goethean and Diagnothian Societies

OF

FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE,

LANCASTER, PA.,

JULY 26, 1859.

BY

WILLIAM A. STOKES.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Gœthean Hall,
Lancaster, Pa., July 26, 1859.

Hon. Will. A. Stokes,

Dear Sir—In behalf of the Gœthean Literary Society, we tender you our sincere thanks for the able, eloquent, patriotic and instructive address, which you had the kindness to deliver this evening before her and the Diagnothian, her sister society, and respectfully solicit a copy for publication.

Yours very truly,
CYRUS CORT,
C. R. DIEFFENBACHER,
H. H. W. HIBSHMAN,
Committee of G. L. S.

Lancaster, Pa., July 26, 1859.

Gentlemen:—In accordance with your request, I place at your disposal the manuscript of the address which I this evening delivered.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,
WILL. A. STOKES.

To Messrs.
Cyrus Cort,
C. R. Dieffenbacher,
H. H. W. Hibshman.

ADDRESS.

In 1775, the prelude to the drama of the Revolution was enacted; the actors mostly unconscious of the parts they were performing, passive in the power of Providence, founders of an empire, unaware of the consummation which was to crown their labors, sponsors in a national baptism, they saw neither the altar nor the great High Priest, whose eternal decrees determine the destinies of all men.

So far from designing or desiring independence of the British crown, nearly all the patriots of the time felt a strong attachment for the British government, and with tender affection and loyal devotion spoke of the *mother country* in tones of filial piety. This was both natural and reasonable. English soil was sacred because it held the bones of their fathers; her traditions of glory gilded the western horizon, her literature was also theirs, her laws were those which protected the persons and property of the colonists—above all, she taught to her American children the true lessons of liberty. Liberty, plant of slow growth, product of ages, which struck its roots deep into the ground wherever Anglo-Saxon men were found. It is a popular error that freedom was first asserted by the sword of the Revolution. It was vindicated, not originated. No American ever was a slave. The Pilgrims of Plymouth, uncouth, ascetic, inflexible, were strong in the logic of Democracy; the cavaliers of Virginia, gallant, arrogant, cultivated, were haughty in their assertion of political equality; the Catholics of Maryland proclaimed the principle of unlimited legislative representation; Penn's frame of government for Pennsylvania declared that its object was "to support power in reverence with the people, and secure the

people from the abuse of power, that they may be free by their just obedience, and the magistrates honorable by their just administration; for liberty without obedience is confusion and obedience without liberty is slavery."

Differing in all other respects, there was from the beginning cordial concurrence, among all the colonists, in the assertion maintenance and enjoyment of perfect political freedom They always insisted on independent local legislation, were always jealous of the interference of their governors, always reverenced the fathers and martyrs of England, from Runnymede to James II, who had philosophically developed or heroically witnessed the origin, nature and extent of the just powers of government. Their minds had appropriated these teachings, become impregnated with this philosophy, so that Mr. Jefferson unconsciously repeated the language of Locke in the Declaration of Independence.

It is true that allegiance to the king of England was a duty, but it gave rights essential to the protection of communities too feeble for self-defence. But for this two centuries ago the country might have been converted into a Spanish province; but for this a century ago it might have been conquered by France. In either event death to all hope of Freedom must have been the consequence, for these continental nations are radically wanting in the power to appreciate the principle of Liberty. The history of the convulsive changes of government in France is a uniform sequence of anarchy, blood and despotism, and tends to the melancholy conclusion that the fire of Freedom burns only in the bosoms of a single race.

Notwithstanding all differences of origin, institutions, religion, manners and pursuits of the several colonies, they were all warmed and enlightened by this sacred fire. More than this, it formed a cohesive attraction, which in the presence of savage enemies on the one hand, and royal and proprietary usurping governors on the other hand, created a bond of union as early as 1643 among the New Englanders, followed in 1722 by the Albany Congress of Commissioners; in 1754 by a convention called by the English administration;

ne more important meeting of 1765 in New York, in which t was resolved that the sole power of taxation rested in the co-onial legislatures, all preparatory to the Congress of 1774, suc-eeded the next year by the immortal Congress of 1775, which aid the foundations of our independence and permanent glory; not, however, until all means of conciliation, all pa-ience, all attachment had been exhausted in repeated unsuc-cessful attempts to procure a recognition of the rights of the colonists to the management of their domestic policy. These wo years, crowded by great acts of great men, marked still nore strongly by the purity of good men—for the authors of he Republic were both great and good—contain the concen-rated political wisdom of all the past, and emblazon in lu-minous characters irrefrangible vindications of human rights for the enlightening of all future ages.

Not rashly, nor heated by passion, but calmly, tender of their allegiance, they declared the inalienable rights of free-men, and resolved that they were entitled "to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial leg-islatures, in all cases of taxation and internal policy, subject only to the negative of their sovereign."

In the midst of humble petitions, haughtily rejected, pro-fessions of loyalty scorned by the monarch, declarations of devotion unheeded, prayers from this side of the Atlantic, and fresh contrivances of extortion from the other side, varied only by vascillations of weakness and tyranny, blood was shed at Lexington and Concord, and the impending horrors of civil war startled the incipient nation. Struck as by light-ning from heaven—and the tumult of these peasant conflicts was the voice of the Divine—every heart throbbed with in-dignation, and instant measures were taken for defence. Yet in all the agitation of these throes and pangs, few anticipated the birth of a nation. Indignation at the measures of the ministry was mingled with reverence for the monarch, and most men were still proud of the name of Englishmen.

At this critical moment (January, 1776) appeared an anony-mous pamphlet of forty pages, entitled "*Common Sense*," on the origin and design of government, of monarchy and her-

editary succession, of the ability of America to become independent. It was written by Thomas Paine, an Englishman, the son of a respectable Quaker stay-maker of Thetford, himself brought up to the same calling, of very limited education, but powerful intellect, warm passions and unshrinking confidence; still young, he had already passed through many and various phases of life; at sixteen absconding from his father's house, he was a pennyless adventurer in the streets of London; thence he went to Dover, and at both places he worked at his trade; next he entered the navy and went to sea in a privateer; soon disgusted with this life, he resumed his trade and opened a shop at Sandwitch, married, removed to Margate, where his wife died, as is alleged, from his ill treatment of her. From Margate he went again to London and thence returned to Thetford. In 1761 he was made a subordinate excise agent; dismissed, after four years for misconduct, he turned schoolmaster in London, but next year, re-appointed to office, he lived in Lewes, married the daughter of a deceased grocer and went into that business, in which he failed, was sold out, accused of smuggling and again dismissed from the excise; he quarreled with his wife, separated from her, abandoned her, and again wandered to London, where he became acquainted with Dr. Franklin, who sent him to this country with a letter of introduction to Richard Bache, in which he asked him to procure Paine employment as "a clerk or assistant tutor in a school, or assistant surveyor." He arrived at Philadelphia in 1774, and became editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. He now had access to books, and the dormant energies of his mind were aroused. He eagerly embraced the cause of the colonies, and was soon to act an important and meritorious part in the coming conflict.

When "*Common Sense*" was published a great blow was struck. It was felt from New England to the Carolinas, it resounded throughout the world. Principles of politics were proclaimed, not new, but true; sanctioned by antiquity, familiar to the learned, but hitherto concealed in books unknown to the public; principles which found instant recognition in

he natural sense of justice which God implants in all His creatures; arguments were adduced which went right home to the understanding, and found there immediate reception. Common sense—the best kind of sense, without which knowledge is vain—eagerly embraced and appropriated the dogmas and conclusions of this master-piece of popular reasoning, which rather aroused what already lay deep down in the hidden recesses of the human mind, than communicated any strange sentiments. The boldness, vigor, directness, the very rudeness, the racy roughness of the author, gave irresistible force to his matchless appeal. Nor did he hesitate to avail himself of all rhetorical adjuncts. He not only reasoned but he flattered; he availed himself of prejudice, he dealt freely in invective. For this I do not censure him, for the Tribune of the people, whose words were intended to dismember an empire, might well resort to all the aids of art in accomplishing his stupendous task.

Admirable as was the execution of this work, it was not written spontaneously, but at the suggestion of Dr. Rush, who read the sheets as they were composed, as did also Dr. Franklin and Samuel Adams. The former struck from the manuscript what seems a telling sentence—"A greater absurdity cannot be conceived of, than three millions of people running to their sea-coast every time a ship arrives from London, to know what portion of liberty they should enjoy." When the manuscript was ready for the press, Paine proposed to call it "*Plain Truth*," but Dr. Rush objected and gave it the title of "*Common Sense*." Many years afterwards, General Washington applied the title of the book to its author, and spoke of the merits and services of *Common Sense* as unrewarded by this country.

Certain it is that an instant and immense impetus was given to the cause of independence by the then unknown pamphleteer. The desire of the people for the immemorial liberties of their ancestors, gave place to a determination to free themselves forever from foreign domination, and submission to a king was exchanged for resolution to establish a Republic.

Paine's brawny arm applied the torch which set the coun-

try in a flame, to be extinguished only by the relinquishment of British supremacy; and for this, irrespective of his motives and character, he merits the gratitude of every American.

Subsequently Paine alleged that, without reading books, he had discovered the principles of government, and was the author of independence. Each of these claims was the absurd product of ignorance and arrogance. No single, unaided, uninstructed mind, is competent to grasp the vast subject of the natural relations of man to his fellows, the mutual rights and obligations of soeiety, and the proper structure of government—its objects, powers and limits. For all this right reason is essential, but knowledge of the concentrated wisdom of the virtuous and learned is also essential. What is new is generally false, but "*Common Sense*" was neither new nor false.

Besides what books had said, men had spoken. The approaching disenthralment of America, felt in the bosoms of the yeomen of Massachusetts, had been predicted by the orators of Virginia. The rays of the sun of independence were already gilding the horizon with promise of a glorious future. The coming brightness of the perfect day of freedom was revealed to the common sense of the people, before it was announced in the *Common Sense* of Paine. If the latter originated nothing, it disseminated the truth of politics and precipitated the inevitable moment of National maturity.

With all its merit "*Common Sense*" has proved ephemeral. It has died the death of a pamphlet. Harrington, Sydney and Locke still authoritatively define the functions of the State and the duty of the citizen, but who reads Paine? True it is that the subsequent base prostitution of his powers, has tended to diminish the influence of his earlier productions, but this alone will not acconnt for their neglect. We all read Bolingbroke, Hume still teaches us history, Voltaire delights us with poetry, Gibbon's gorgeous pictures fascinate us, and many other illustrious infidels live in their works, for the instruction of mankind on subjects not involving theological error. A man was needed for the crisis of the Revolution Paine appeared, did his work, and is fast descending to obliv-

on, without hope of rescue, unless by immortality of in-
amy.

His was not the fate of many benefactors of our race, whose only earthly reward is the homage of after ages. Immediately this obscure son of a mechanic, this discarded English excise officer, needy adventurer of tainted morals and disreputable history, earning a scanty livelihood as journeyman editor of a provincial periodical, became the wonder, admiration and hope of millions. The first glow of gratitude encircled his name with radiance before which the glory of earlier and purer patriots became dim. He was at once a favorite of the leading soldiers and statesmen of that eventful period. Attached to the army, he was the frequent guest and habitual associate of Washington and his officers. Pennsylvania gave him five hundred pounds, an unexampled price for forty printed pages, and munificent compensation compared with that of Samuel Johnson, for "Taxation no Tyranny," and similar productions, on the other side of the question.

Paine's pen was never idle. During the six months which elapsed between the publication of "*Common Sense*" and the Declaration of Independence, he wrote several essays in the Philadelphia newspapers, over the signature of "The Forester," in defence of the doctrines of his pamphlet. They are not equal to his other productions, and are known only to those who are curious in such matters.

In December, 1776, after the defeat on Long Island and the loss of Fort Washington and Fort Lee, when the first burst of patriotism was followed by universal despondency, and the cause of the country seemed lost at the commencement of the struggle, Paine published the first number of "*The Crisis*," which aroused, as by magic, the drooping ardor of the people. Even now, transported by imagination to that time of gloom, amidst the darkness of the tempest in which the frail bark of State seemed about to be engulphed with all the hopes of humanity, our blood warms as we hear the inspiring language, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot, will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country, but he that

stands it *now* deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph." This soul-stirring appeal was read at the head of every regiment, and inspired a martial ardor which both animated and filled the ranks of the army. Published every where, it every where infused fresh vigor into the counsels and renewed resolution into the masses. The battle of Trenton was the first fruit of this re-animated enthusiasm, and the first assurance of confidence in the armed citizens of the Republic.

The second number of "*The Crisis*" followed the affair of Trenton. During the war, and immediately on the conclusion of peace, the series was continued, making in all eighteen numbers. None of them are equal to the first; many are feeble in argument, naked of facts, and full of such senseless invective as evince personal malignity, and thus become ineffective. Still, with all these defects, there are touches of nature which reach the heart, and a courageous logic well adapted to captivate the popular understanding. Undoubtedly they aided the cause of the country, and probably to a greater extent than would be now supposed from reading them. Their very coarseness gave them strength; they aroused a patriotic rage and, aided by the reputation of their author, circulated in homely recesses which more elaborate productions were not likely to reach.

Even this glowing patriotism was made to order and purchased like any other marketable commodity. Paine paused after some numbers of *The Crisis* had been published and their value was perceived, until Robert Morris induced him to proceed by promise of a stipulated sum of money as compensation for his services.

In 1777 Paine was appointed by Congress secretary to the committee for foreign affairs. In less than two years, and pending proceedings against him for false publications and violations of his trust and oath, he resigned office to escape a disgraceful dismissal. Always turbulent and troublesome, he attempted to divert attention from his own conduct by

xciting Congress to a quarrel, on the alleged ground that he was to be condemned without a hearing; but the attempt, almly rebuked by Congress, was wholly unsuccessful.

From the time of this development of his character, and eprobation of his conduct, Paine sunk in the public estimaion, though for some years his strength of intellect, and the nemory of his services buoyed up his falling reputation. Vith matchless assurance he not only reverted to the official osition which he had disgraced, but falsely announced himelf, on the title page of a subsequent production, as "Secetary for Foreign Affairs in the American War." The next ear he was appointed clerk to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania—so early commenced in our Commonwealth hat blind party confidence which has often cursed us with ncompetence or crime.

In 1785, senseless of shame, he solicited Congress and procured an appropriation of three thousand dollars, though a previous unsuccessful attempt to make him "Historiographer of the United States" was received with general indignation.

New York, doubtless by dint of importunity, made him a present of a farm at New Rochelle, which he valued at six thousand pounds sterling.

Paine was now, by the product of his patriotism, a landed proprietor with full pockets. His services were amply recognized, his talents were universally admitted. But for the taint of corrupt morality, the grossness of his manners and greediness for gain, he might now—the Revolution accomplished, and the prosperity of the Republic assured—have entered upon a distinguished and honorable career and given to posterity another glorious name for the catalogue of the founders of American institutions. He was reserved to teach another lesson—that God's vengeance is not always delayed for eternity, but that, even in this world, blasphemous defiance of the Divine authority carries the swift justice of a present curse.

Descending daily lower and lower, fast losing his once pre-eminent position, Paine, in 1787, left this country for his native land, with the double intent of overturning the British

government and making money by an iron bridge which h had invented. He went first to Paris and mingled with th false philosophers who were then proclaiming the reign c reason, rejecting reverence for the Creator, and preparing th bloody path in which thousands soon marched in horror t violent death.

In England he soon fell into pecuniary difficulties, was ar rested for debt and bailed by some American merchants. Hi project of the iron bridge, having failed he devoted himself ex clusively to agitation, was in correspondence with the Frencl revolutionists and their sympathisers in England, and confi dently expected the day when the continental tempest, nov with blind fury desolating all before it, would sweep over Bri tain, envelop the land in fire, saturate the soil with blood, anc destroy the superstition of religion and the tyranny of law Careless of consequences to others, always cautious for his owı safety, he delighted in the overthrow of whatever was established, and found content only amidst the storms of passion.

At this juncture Edmund Burke addressed England and the world. Fast friend of America, author of her colonial history, inflexible champion of her rights, first of English statesmen—orator, philosopher, unsurpassed in ancient or modern times; a whig, a reformer, liberal, learned, experienced, wise full of sensibility, ever sympathising with suffering, softened to womanly tenderness by recent family affliction, profoundly penetrated by sorrow for the French tragedy, then in its most fatal act, struck with horror at the impending peril of England, his vivid imagination conjuring up visions of political pandemonium, the reign of demons to usurp the reign of law, smiling plains soon, he feared, to be scenes of carnage, all ages and both sexes about to be enveloped in a common calamity too dreadful for language to describe; animated by these feelings, terrified by these fears, Edmund Burke wrote his "Reflections on the French Revolution."

Eloquent and animated as is this immortal work, we may not concur in all its views, for the writer's intense feeling often clouded his judgment; but no one can read it without reverent admiration for the author, and conviction of his pur-

r and power. More than all else it stilled the storm about burst in England. It was answered, amongst others, by o celebrated, but very different men—Mackintosh, jurist, ilosopher, historian; and Paine, hireling patriot, revolution-t, infidel.

The latter entitled his reply "*The Rights of Man.*" It nstitutes, with the second part published in 1792, the most aborate of Paine's political works. He examines very fairly e natural condition of man and the objects of political or-nization, asserts the inalienable right of absolute control of overnment by the governed, denies the binding force of any olitical compact, developes the sound idea that the will of e citizen is always supreme, and his interest the sole legiti-ate object of the State; attacks monarchy, hereditary legis-tors, the settlement of the Revolution of 1688 and the ritish constitution; defends all the proceedings of the French aders; lands the American system, villifies with passionate rdor all the existing institutions of England. Mr. Burke is ot treated with the excessive rudeness which commonly dis-nguishes Paine's attacks.

The real object was to excite the people to rebellion, and he whole scope and style of both parts of the work are most droitly adapted to this end. It produced an enormous sen-ation, chiefly among mechanics and tradesmen, for to those naccustomed to consider such subjects, discussions of these rand topics, which concern all men everywhere and at all imes, are extremely fascinating. But it rarely found its way nto the cottage of the ploughman, and it produced no im-ression on the higher classes. It therefore failed of its object, hough it certainly did, by promoting the formation of reform nd revolutionary clubs, assist in sending some very decent nd some very disreputable persons to prison, the pillory and Botany Bay. Although much more extensive and ambitious, it is not in any respect equal to "*Common Sense,*" or the best numbers of "*The Crisis,*" and abounds in gross historical blunders. Still it is very striking, plain, plausible, mostly true in its enunciation of abstract positions, erroneous often in their application, and weakened by the bitter spirit which pervades

every page. It seems rather the revengeful diatribe of a c- charged excise officer, than the calm discussion of a politi l philosopher.

A prosecution was commenced against Paine for the pu- lication of the second part, the first having passed unnotic by the government, notwithstanding Mr. Burke had decla that such writings deserved no other refutation than that criminal justice. Although the culprit absconded pending t prosecution, the trial went on in his absence, and he w convicted of a seditious libel upon the Revolution and t settlement of the crown and regal government, as by la established; and also upon the Bill of Rights, the Legislatu Laws and Parliament, and upon the King. He had the hon of being defended by Thomas Erskine, the greatest forens advocate since the age of Cicero, who delivered in his beh a speech of wonderful ingenuity and captivating eloquenc insufficient, however, to convince the jury, and soon to surpassed by an argument against his next publication.

Considering that Paine was an alien, who came to Engla for the express purpose of violently destroying the gover ment, and that his book was a clear infraction of the law, w can hardly censure the Attorney General for his legal vind cation of the existing system. Paine always discarded peac ful means of obtaining redress of grievances, and scoute what he considered the degradation of petition. Revolutio the desparate and tardy remedy for accumulated and intole able wrongs, to be rightly resorted to only when all peacef means of redress have wholly failed, was the political panace of this apostle of blood.

But believing with Mr. Jefferson, that error of opinion ma be safely tolerated, when reason is left free to combat it, think that this persecution was unnecessary and therefore mistake. It gave to the intended victim, not punishment fo crime, but the tinsel crown of a pretended martyrdom; an the prosecuting counsel being immeasurably overmatched b Mr. Erskine, the glory of the illustrious advocate was reflec ed on his client.

Paine was now in France, member of the National Con

ention, destroying a constitution and trying a king. The onstitution effectively cancelled in 1792 was that adopted in 791, prefixed to "The Rights of Man," and lauded by Paine s the master-piece of wisdom and justice. The slaughtered nonarch was Louis XVI, whom Paine had praised as the riend, benefactor and champion of America.

Lamartine declares his letter against the king to have been gnoble in its language, as cruel in its intentions, a long series of insults, heaped, even in the depths of a dungeon, upon a man whose generous assistance he had formerly solicited. An American, a citizen, a philosopher, demanded, if not the life, at least the ignominy of the king who had sheltered with French bayonets the cradle of the liberty of his country. Ingratitude expressed itself in outrages; and the philosopher degraded himself below despotism in the language of Paine.

Order, abuses, law, and responsibility were all swept away together in the hurricane of frenzy, which culminated in the death of the king.

The reign of reason was inaugurated. Altars were overthrown, churches were desecrated, the ministers of religion were banished, a prostitute was consecrated as goddess of the new dispensation, the revolutionary tribunal was instituted, the guillotine was invented, the streets of Paris streamed with blood; the sanguinary example was speedily followed in the departments; neither manly defence, nor the tears of women, nor the terrors of children, softened the hearts or stayed the hands of the assassins who had usurped the functions of the Republic, and themselves successively followed in the fatal footsteps of their victims, to be succeeded by other tyrants, who, in their turn, were also devoted to death.

All men must condemn and deplore these excesses. Besides the unutterable agony of the time, they gave a shock to the cause of Freedom which will vibrate through ages, and made the very name "Republic" odious throughout Europe In France the fury of the Revolution, wielded by the Executive Council and the Committee of Public Safety, sunk into the weakness of the Directory, and at length the people joyfully

received from a great genius and successful soldier, the secu y of despotism—sole refuge from anarchy and corruption.

But the original motives and objects of the Revolut were right, and its ultimate result was political purgation f corruption, tainting the whole body of the kingdom, a l threatening the existence of social order. I need not rep t the long catalogue of oppressions under which the peo groaned; the growth of centuries, they had become an intol able accumulation, and justified a demand for reformati . Unfortunately many of those who seized power at the inst of the convulsion and became the guiding spirits in the co test, were of the school of infidelity, and falsely assumed th obedience to God is inseparable from submission to roy tyranny. The French of the seventeenth and eighteen centuries—restless, acute and oppressed—had reflected on t cause and cure for the stupendous abuses which all felt—h investigated the origin and objects of government, and d cussed the nature of the social compact. The illustrio bishops, Fenelon, Bossuet and Massillon had preached, bo to sovereigns and subjects, their rights and duties, as taug by Divine revelation, and had proclaimed, with the fit boldne of their heavenly mission, that the sole object of governme was the good of its subjects, its sole authority the public wi Royal responsibility and republicanism rest alike on the uni of the human race, and the universal accountability of a creatures to the Creator, and religion, therefore, is the tru teacher of equality.

Unfortunately, the more recent writings of Voltaire, Dide rot, D'Alembert and Rousseau, commended to passionate an corrupt natures by their general assaults, by their unlimite license and by their radical tone—containing much which i true and good mingled with much that is false and wicked—became the text books of the time, to the neglect of olde and sounder works.

Hence dreadful consequences, incalculable, spread throug Europe by the armed missionaries of discord, who, proclaim ing peace to cottages and war on palaces, conquered king and corrupted peoples; hence discord, insecurity, license

ece the abundant modern crop of infidel publications ch have disgraced literature, corrupted morals, and de- ed thousands.

etributive justice required that the authors and actors in convulsion of the French Revolution should be punished, they promptly received the wages of sin. Paine, though tle compared with the most of his fellows, did not alto- er escape. He lost the confidence of the Jacobins, su- ne and sanguinary despots, and in 1793 was expelled the Convention on the pretence that, being an alien, he ineligible to a seat; but probably his vote on the sen- e of the King, for imprisonment during the war and ban- nent afterwards, was the real cause of his quarrel with oespierre and his associates; for being naturalized, and ng without objection as legislator and judge, he was as ch a citizen as if born on the soil of France.

oon after, under a decree of the Convention, he was com- ted to prison, where he remained, in daily peril of his life, once actually on the fatal list, until the fall of Robespierre his faction. Liberated in the autumn of 1794, he was ored to his place in the Convention, and participated vely in its proceedings. He opposed the new constitution, ch in 1795 abolished the committees of Revolution and ty, and gave an imperfect but improved stability to the ernment by establishing the Executive Directory, which finally crushed by Napoleon. The dissolution of the vention closed Paine's legislative career, but he remained rance seven years longer, leading a life of excess, but still y with his pen, directed against the Christian religion, ch he had formerly appealed to as the perfection of purity the best defence of freedom; against the constitution and ernment of the United States, which he had pronounced only real republic in character and practice; against George shington, to whom he had often offered adulation even nger than his present censure. His most celebrated attack religion is the "*Age of Reason*," a reproduction, in a new most effective and popular form, of the oft-refuted as- lts on Christianity, based on an assumption of the power

of finite man to judge of the justice of the Infinite; and assumes the universality of human knowledge and the infallability of human judgment. The entire argument is vicious, because it rests on these false assumptions; it subjects Religion, which if of God, must be above man, to purely intellectual tests; it ignores the historical, presumptive and internal evidence, which in regard to a profane narrative would be undisputed. It is coarse and strong, brutal and indecent; arraigns the Almighty, as known by revelation, for cuelty and tyranny; discards the argument deduced from fulfilment of prophesy, from the extraordinary propagation of Christianity, from its morality, its self-abnegation, its charity, its countless blessings to the human race, its redemption of nations from the bondage of superstition and idolatry; treats the miracles as false and the Apostles as impostors, ridicules all biblical history, from Paradise to Calvary. Xenophon, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, all the wisest and most virtuous philosophers of antiquity, had felt the need of religious light, of a Divine revelation; but Paine held that the light of Nature was sufficient for morals; he rejected faith and shut his eyes to the blazing glory of the sun of righteousness and its genial fruits, in the order, security and morality of Christian civilization, as compared with the dark developments of heathenism and the discord of infidelity.

Its poison is in its style, easily comprehended by the unlearned; its antidote is in its blasphemy, so profligate as to shock even unbelievers. I am not in this presence to answer a malignant proclamation of hostility to heaven, but I beg to present the opinions entertained of it by an illustrious philosopher, Benjamin Franklin, and an illustrious lawyer, Thomas Erskine.

Dr. Franklin, to whom the first part seems to have been submitted before publication, wrote to the author: "I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundations of all religion. For without the belief of a Providence, that takes cognizance of, guards and guides, and may favor particular

rsns, there is no motive to worship a Deity, to fear his dis-
eure, or to pray for his protection. I will not enter into
y discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire
At present I shall only give you my opinion, that, though
u reasons are subtile, and may prevail with some readers,
u will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments
ankind on that subject, and the consequence of printing
is piece will be a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself,
is hief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits
ainst the wind, spits in his own face.

"But, were you to succeed, do you imagine any good
o.d be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live
vtuous life, without the assistance afforded by religion;
o having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and
elisadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of rese-
tn to enable you to resist common temptations. But
ik how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and
nrant men and women, and of inexperienced, inconsiderate
oth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of reli-
o to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and
tan them in the practice of it till it becomes *habitual*, which
te great point for its security. And perhaps you are in-
ted to her originally—that is, to your religious education,
r the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value
ourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of
aoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain
rnk with our most distinguished authors. For among us
not necessary, as among Hottentots, that a youth, to be
ied into the company of men, should prove his manhood
y eating his mother.

"I would advise you, therefore, not to attempt unchaining
iger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other
eon; whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mor-
fiation by the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps
god deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked
ie religion, what would they be *if without it?*"

aine having fled to France, one Williams, of London,
riter of the *Age of Reason*, was very properly prosecuted

for the publication. Mr. Erskine, as Council for the Crown delivered on the trial, an overwhelming argument, from which I beg you to allow me to adopt this passage:

"But it seems this is an age of reason, and the time and the person are at last arrived, that are to dissipate the errors that have overspread the past generations of ignorance. The believers in Christianity are many, but it belongs to the few that are wise to correct its credulity. Belief is an act of reason, and superior reason may, therefore, dictate to the weak. In running the mind over the long list of sincere and devout Christians, I cannot help lamenting, that Newton had not lived to this day, to have had his shallowness filled up by this new flood of light. But the subject is too awful for irony—I will speak plainly and directly. Newton was a Christian! Newton, whose mind burst forth from the fetters fastened by nature upon our finite conceptions; Newton, whose science was truth, and the foundation of whose knowledge of it was philosophy—not those visionary and arrogant presumptions which too often usurp its name, but philosophy resting upon the basis of mathematics, which, like figures, cannot lie; Newton, who carried the line and rule to the uttermost barriers of creation, and explored the principles by which all created matter exists, and is held together. But this extraordinary man, in the mighty reach of his mind, overlooked, perhaps, the errors, which a minuter investigation of the created things on the earth might have taught him. What will then be said of the great Mr. Boyle, who looked into the organic structure of all matter, even to the inanimate substances which the foot treads upon? Such a man may be supposed to have been equally qualified with Mr. Paine to look through nature to nature's God; yet the result of all his contemplations was, the most confirmed and devout belief in all which the other holds in contempt, as despicable and drivelling superstitions. But this error might, perhaps, arise from a want of due attention to the foundations of human judgment, and the structure of that understanding which God has given us for the investigation of truth. Let that question be answered by Mr. Locke, who by the highest pitch of devotion and adora-

tion, was a Christian. Mr. Locke, whose office was, to detect the errors of thinking, by going up to the very fountains of thought, and to direct into the proper track of reasoning, the devious mind of man, by showing him its whole process, from the first perceptions of sense to the last conclusions of ratiocination, putting a rein upon false opinion, by practical rule for the conduct of human judgment.

"But these men, it may be said, were only deep thinkers, and lived in their closets, unaccustomed to the traffic of the world, and to the laws which practically regulate mankind. Gentlemen! in the place where we now sit to administer the justice of this great country, the never-to-be-forgotten Sir Mathew Hale presided; whose faith in Christianity is an exalted commentary upon its truth and reason, and whose life was a glorious example of its fruits; whose justice, drawn from the pure fountain of the Christian dispensation, will be, in all ages, a subject of the highest reverence and admiration. But it is said by the author, that the Christian fable is but the tale of the more ancient superstitions of the world, and may be easily detected by a proper understanding of the mythologies of the Heathens. Did Milton understand those mythologies: was he less versed than Mr. Paine in the superstitions of the world? No, they were the subjects of his immortal song; and though shut out from all recurrence to them, he poured them forth from the stores of a memory rich with all that man ever knew, and laid them in their order as the illustration of real and exalted faith, the unquestionable source of that fervid genius which has cast a kind of shade upon most of the other works of man.

"'He passed the flaming bounds of space and time:
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze.
He saw—but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.'

"But it was only the light of the body that was extinguished: 'the celestial light shone inward, and enabled him to justify the ways of God to man'—the result of his thinking was nevertheless not quite the same as the author's before us. The mysterious incarnation of our blessed Saviour (which

this work blasphemes in words so wholly unfit for the m th of a christian, or for the ear of a court of justice, that I re not and will not give them utterance) Milton made the g nd conclusion of his Paradise Lost, the rest from his fini d labors, and the ultimate hope, expectation and glory of he world.

> "'A Virgin is his mother, but his sire,
> The power of the most high; he shall ascend,
> The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
> With earth's wide bounds, his glory with the heavens.'

"The immortal poet having thus put into the mouth of e angel the prophecy of man's redemption, follows it with a solemn and beautiful admonition, addressed in the poem o our great first parent, but intended as an address to his p terity through all generations—

> "'This having learn'd, thou hast attain'd the sum
> Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
> Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal powers,
> All secrets of the deep, all nature's works,
> Or works of God in Heaven, air, earth, or sea,
> And all the riches of this world enjoyest,
> And all the rule one empire; only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add faith,
> Add virtue, patience, temperance, add love,
> By name to come call'd charity, the soul
> Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
> To leave this paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far.'

"Thus you find all that is great, or wise, or splendid, or ill trious amongst created beings; all the minds gifted beyo ordinary nature, if not inspired by the universal author, the advancement and dignity of the world, though divided b distant ages and by clashing opinions, yet joining as it we in one sublime chorus, to celebrate the truths of christianit laying upon its holy altars the neverfading brightness of th immortal wisdom. Against all this concurring testimony, v find suddenly from the author of this book, that the Bib teaches nothing but 'lies, obscenity, cruelty and injustic Had he ever read our Saviour's sermon on the mount, which the great principles of our faith and duty are sur

med up? Let us all but read and practice it; and lies, obscenity, cruelty and injustice, and all human wickedness, will be banished from the world!"

I am not to attempt to gild this refined gold, pure product from the teeming intellect of the mighty advocate whom every lawyer recognizes as Erskine the Great.

Williams was injudiciously defended by his counsel and betrayed by his attorney. After his conviction Erskine was his only friend, and generously aided his distressed family. But we must return to Paine's career.

His assaults on the American constitution and the President are in a letter published *in Paris* in 1796, and adapted therefore to degrade this country in the estimation of foreigners, to exasperate the hostile feeling which France then exhibited towards the United States, and to insult that august benefactor of mankind, who already received the universal homage of the virtuous and wise.

Let me present for the approval of the pretended patriots who follow Paine, his opinion of our political system. "I declare myself," he says, "opposed to several matters in the constitution, particularly to the manner in which what is called the Executive is formed, and to the long duration of the Senate; and if I live to return to America I will use all my endeavors to have them altered. It was only to the absolute necessity of establishing some Federal authority, extending equally over all the States, that an instrument so inconsistent as the present Federal Constitution is, obtained a suffrage. As the Federal constitution is a copy, not quite so base as the original, of the form of the British Government, an imitation of its vices was naturally to be expected."

So also in 1797, his letter to the people of France, speaking of the evils of a single Executive Chief, declares, "An individual by election is almost as bad as the hereditary system, except that there is always a better chance of not having an idiot."

Advocate of a plural Executive, his opinion on the Pennsylvania Constitution shows that he was in favor of a single

legislative body. These speculations have been vanquishe by experience, which has shown the inefficient weakness of divided Executive, and the dangerous rashness of a body which rests the entire legislative power. Paine was rigl when years before, he declared this now assailed constitutio the admiration and model of the modern, as Athens had bee of the ancient world.

It is impossible not to perceive that even this governmei already exhibits the mournful truth that all the works of ma are tainted by the corruption of his fallen nature, and contai the elements of disease and death—legitimate consequence c the sentence of expulsion from Paradise. But while we trem ble, let us hope. Let us meditate on the past to inspire courag for the future. Never forget that as the constitution was th result of concession and compromise, the influence of that sam spirit of generosity and conciliation is necessary to preserve it Its construction was a labor of love; let it be perpetually reno vated by the political affection of this great national family It comes to us sanctioned not only by the wisdom of its authors and the experience of many years, but sanctified by the approval of that great man whose signature first authenticated it. In the war of parties, which may sometimes be right; in the conflicts of faction, which are always wrong, may his name be the ark of safety for the constitution. When ambitious men may attempt to destroy, when weak men may endanger the existence of the constitution, may his name bear it aloft far above the influence of these causes. When the people may lose their reverence for, and the States may wish to overturn the constitution, may the memory of Washington, like a holy influence, mould the hearts of the people aright, and arrest the progress of the greatest evil which can ever befall the country. The day for making another constitution has passed; it cannot be done; there is not enough of the salt of political virtue left since the men of the revolution have gone to their reward. Difficult indeed has it sometimes been to preserve its purity; impossible it would be to reconstruct it. Let us reverence it as a holy thing, let us defend it as a sacred

treasure; let us strike down with a prompt arm and strong hand any man whose baseness can be bold enough to lay a finger on it. Let us give it to our children, as full of beauty and blessings as from our fathers it came to us.

It is difficult to understand how even the extremest folly and wickedness could seduce any rational creature into the indecency exhibited by Thomas Paine towards George Washington, in this same infamous production of mad malignity. So shameless, under the demonaic inspiration of infidelity, had become the man whose patriotic appeals twenty years before aroused the country to arms, conflict, victory, freedom and independence, that he dared to address this vulgar vituperation to the conquerer in that sublime contest, the Father of his Country.

"When we speak," said he, "of military character, something more is to be understood than constancy; and something more ought to be understood than the Fabian system of doing nothing. The nothing part can be done by any body. Old Mrs. Thompson, the housekeeper of head-quarters, could have done it as well as Mr. Washington. Deborah would have been as good as Barak. The successful skirmishes at the close of one campaign, matters that would scarcely be noticed in a better state of things, make the brilliant exploits of General Washington's seven campaigns. No wonder we see so much pusillanimity in the President when we see so little enterprise in the General.

"Elevated to the chair of the Presidency, you assumed the merit of every thing to yourself, and the natural ingratitude of your constitution began to appear. You commenced your Presidential career by encouraging and swallowing the grossest adulation, and you traveled America from one end to the other, to put yourself in the way of achieving it. You have as many addresses in your chest as James II.

"Monopolies of every kind marked your administration, almost in the moment of its commencement. The lands obtained by the Revolution were lavished upon partisans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the specula-

tor; injustice was acted under the pretence of faith; and
chief of the army became the patron of the fraud.

"And as to you, sir, treacherous in private friendship a
a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to dec
whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether y
have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever h
any?"

The provocation to this attack was that Washington v
lated his duty by not interfering for Paine's liberation fr
imprisonment; and the assumed ground of this duty was t
he was a citizen of the country of which Washington v
President. This assumption recognizes the slavish doctr
of perpetual allegience, is wholly inconsistent with Pain
principles and conduct, violates the rights of man by bindi
him for ever by the accident of birth, is denied in this coun
and practically abandoned by most European nations.
double allegiance is an impossibility, for, carried to its utm
results, it might condemn a soldier to serve, at the same tir
in two hostile armies; he therefore who becomes by natura
zation a citizen of one country, ceases to be a citizen of t
country of his birth or previous adoption; wherefore wh
Paine became by law a Frenchman he lost his American pol
cal character, which he never resumed, and the President co
not pretend to obtrude himself between the French Repub
and one of its subjects, arrested by authority of the actu
government. The prudence of Washington saved us fro
the peril of his presence here during the violent contests
the Adams administration, when half of our people we
alleged to sympathise with England and the other half we
champions of France—both more ardent than wise—a conte
which jeopardised the existence of the Republic far mo
than all the vain declamation of these days on the diss
lution of the Union.

Worn out in Europe, outlawed by England and discarde
in France, Paine became anxious to return to America, an
after considerable delay, caused by his fear of arrest, he su
ceeded in landing on our shores in 1802. With him came

woman whom he had seduced or purchased, the wife of one of his Parisian friends, accompanied by three of her children. There is a mystery about this atrocity which remains unexplained, but certain it is, that this poor woman met the ordinary fate of those of her sex who violate the sanctity of the domestic relations. Victim of vice, she was subjected to brutal treatment, suffered the pangs of want and the greater anguish of hopeless and life-long degradation, and doubtless perished miserably.

Mr. Jefferson, now President, had invited Paine to return to the United States in a ship of war, a precedent followed fifty years afterwards by Mr. Fillmore in the case of Kossuth. These two present some points of similarity. Both affecting a philosophic rationalism, turbulent revolutionists, refugees from their respective countries, meddlers in foreign politics, recipients of clamorous ovations, men of words, not deeds. I hope the parallel may go no further. For us at least we should now know, that it is best for us to manage our own affairs in our own way, and reject foreign propaganists as promptly as we would resist foreign armies.

When Mr. Jefferson saw Paine, the "sincere esteem and affectionate attachment" of which he had assured him in the letter of invitation, was sensibly cooled, and as the organizer of American Democracy, whose political character and services have embalmed his memory in the affections of his countrymen, was not easily shocked by rudeness or radicalism, but had a strong stomach for a patriot, we may believe the contemperaneous accounts which reveal Paine as a revolting compound of filth and indecency.

He precipitately plunged into the turmoil of party politics, then exasperated to intensity, beside which the fiercest violence of our time is tranquillity itself. But his day had passed; the the moral sense of the public revolted against his conduct, and the "letter to the citizens of the United States," feeble contrast to the demonstrative logic and fiery ardor of his revolutionary writings, produced no impression.

From Washington he went to New York, thence to his estate at New Rochelle. So odious had he become that his person

was not safe from violence. Old, helpless, having done e state some service, to attack him was brutal and coward; yet, I am ashamed to say, that he was not only hooted r mobs but shot at in his own house. Arms are not the we pons of truth; error can only be refuted by moral means.

For the rest of his life Paine fluctuated between his fa and New York, perpetually tortured by suffering, contentic disappointment and passion. His penury was undoubted a unaccountable. Possessed of ample means for comfort, resorted to every expedient of mendicity, lodged meanly, liv wretchedly, drank deeply, quarrelled with every one, abus his mistress, was involved in petty law suits, became ragge filthy, offensive, disgusting, intolerable, so that no decent pe son would willingly endure his society, and christian charit alone was strong enough to support those who rendered th last attentions to this shadow of greatness, tottering in queru lous imbecility to the grave.

On the details of his latter days I dare not enter; for ther are mysteries of iniquity too profound to be penetrated, excep by the necrological examination of the student of human na ture in its lowest depravity, which, exposed before this mixe audience, would chill you with horror and then drive you from this hall.

He continued, almost to the last, with ever increasing insolence and falsehood, to attack religion and importune for money. But the powerful tones of the "*Age of Reason*" were changed for the whine of doggrel rhyme, and his applications for payment for patriotism were no longer successful. These impious verses are so gross that even the few followers of Paine, though neither nice of taste nor scrupulous of ribaldry, do not venture to use them in their weekly meetings nor to sing them when, in profane orgies, they annually celebrate the birth day of their patron.

His applications to Congress for money recounted his writings during the war, for which he had already received munificent payment, and demanded additional compensation, on the false pretence that he had gone to France in a public character with Col. Laurens in 1781 to procure a loan for the use of

his country. A month afterwards he again addressed a long memorial to Congress, repeating and enforcing his claim. In a fortnight he wrote another peremptory letter, threatening, in case of refusal, to "*offer his services to some other country.*" The next week a fourth letter on the same subject was presented to the House. The committee on claims, to whom these rapidly recurring importunities were referred, reported that the journals "were diligently examined but nothing was therein found tending to show that Mr. Paine was, in any manner, connected with the mission of Col. Laurens; that it did not appear that he was employed by the government or even solicited by any officer thereof to aid in the accomplishment of the object of the mission with which Col. Laurens was entrusted, or that he took any part whatever after his arrival in France in forwarding the negotiation." The claim was of course rejected.

But the night of death was now about to close around this most miserable of men. The story of his death-bed is a tragedy which truly moves to terror and pity. I will not enter upon the soul harrowing incidents; enough for our instruction is it to imagine the revolting process of dissolution, apparent to the horror of an acute and perceptive intellent, appalled by the impending prospect of the final plunge into the unknown ocean of eternity, unconsoled either by contemplation of the past or hope for the future. On the 8th of June, 1809, his pain was ended, his ravings ceased, his blasphemies were silenced; in that forsaken chamber, stillness soon succeeded the groans and screams of anguish, the prayers of terror, the imprecations of despair and the vanity of cowardice, clamorous in senseless defiance of the Omnipotent. Worms embraced the body which man rejected even from the company of the dead; and his soul, suddenly summoned before the Judge of all the world, received a revelation which dissipated doubt as to the responsibility of the creature to the Creator, as to the eternal consequences of the deeds done in the body.

> "How awful is that hour when conscience stings
> The hoary wretch, who on his death bed bears,
> Deep in his soul, the thundering voice that wrings,
> In one dark, damning moment, sins of years!"

I pass by the dishonor of his corpse and the desecration of his grave, for from these scandals no moral can be drawn, and for them poor Paine was not responsible.

Of the man himself I have endeavored to speak frankly and fairly. He is dead, but the grave cannot sanctify treason to God and man. He was a public character; he belongs to history; and to allow morbid sentiment, miscalled charity, to suppress the truth, should be condemned as a weakness which would deprive the world of many wholesome warnings. All have need in the voyage of life of every aid, and the mortal wrecks with which the world's tempests have strewed the shores of time, are beacons of safety to after ages. Vice may deter, virtue may encourage, and both the vile and the pure are the property of the public, when they can be useful either for warning or example.

The narrative of his life is the development of his character, and few biographies are more instructive than Paine's. He was endowed with genius, lived in a momentous era, associated with the leading spirits of the age, was concerned in organizing a new nation. As a writer he was always strong and often eloquent; especially he excelled in statement and invective; as a logician he was plain and striking; he knew the human heart, but appreciated the understanding better, though he has shown that he could arouse the passions when he pleased. His style was so bold, brave and animated that he could always arrest the popular attention; his air of confidence gave him the confidence of his readers, whom he did not hesitate to flatter by appeals to their knowledge and reason. Twice in serious crises of the Revolution, he rendered important service to the cause of liberty and man, by startling, as with thunder, the unthinking to reflection, the irresolute to determination, and the supine to action. Success always followed the efforts of his earlier life in America; a grateful people crowned him with honor; the world was ready to hail him as the champion of Right; fortune smiled, and he might have basked in the sunshine of prosperity, thrilled the earth with the echoes of his fame, and left for posterity a name glorious among the most illustrious of those who have

o aimed, with the trumpet-tongued power of truth, the
en-born maxim of man's equality to man.

ut neither the splendor of his natural genius nor the ad-
itious aid of circumstances, were able to rescue him from
eloom reserved for those conspicuous characters who are
ted by Providence to prove that "the way of the trans-
or is hard."

he memory which might have been so bright and glorious
ies only with the lurid glare of hell. He was shameless,
emptuous, passionate, vindictive, cowardly, unchaste, men-
ous, avaricious, ungrateful, slanderous, false, cruel, im-
ics. He has himself written his own epitaph—*infamous;*
vhat infamy can equal that of him who attempts to break
n the barriers of religion, which alone is efficient protec-
c for social order, domestic happiness, confidence among
, security for right; only comfort in affliction, only anti-
o for evil, only refuge for adversity; chief solace in this
sole hope in the life to come?

hese are the dark deeds which have earned for Paine an
rable celebrity; and for these crimes, which reach beyond
e into the boundless future, crimes which sacrifice immor-
souls, the voice of ages will repeat the sentence of condem-
on, which the avenging angel has already executed.

o each of us this vicious life and dreadful death suggests
sson for our individual instruction, better taught in medi-
on than in words; and in our other character of *citizens,*
s equally suggestive, for if our country is to continue her
reer of prosperity, it must be by the practice of virtue,
ich is only efficiently sustained by religious faith.

Republic in which each citizen is a christian hero, is a
ctacle for the admiration of angels, the imitation of men.
ch a nation may defy the assaults of time, because it is
bilt upon the rock of ages. Such a nation may this become,
he ardent hope and prayer of every patriot.